

1 **ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

2 According to one embodiment, a shallow trench isolation (STI) method (**500**) may
3 include forming an etch mask layer over both a first and second substrate side (**504**). An etch
4 mask layer over a first substrate side (**506**) may be patterned to form a STI etch mask, and
5 trenches may be etched into a substrate (**508**). A trench dielectric layer can be formed over a
6 first substrate side (**510**). An etch mask layer formed over a second substrate side can be
7 etched (**512**), reducing and/or eliminating stress that may deform a substrate or otherwise
8 adversely affect STI features. A trench dielectric may then be chemically-mechanically
9 polished (step **514**).

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